

March 5, 2021

The Honorable Gary A. Winfield & the Honorable Steven J. Stafstrom
Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Judiciary
Connecticut General Assembly
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Co-Chairs Winfield & Stafstrom and Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Penny Barton-Zuckerman. I have lived in Connecticut for 48 years. I am proud to testify in support of **Raised Bill No. 6321, An Act Concerning Adoption and Implementation of the Connecticut Parentage Act.**

Twenty-two years ago I testified before the Joint Committee on Judiciary in support of legislation to allow “second-parent adoption”. At that time, I had been with my now wife for almost 25 years. This was prior to marriage equality. I had adopted both our children as a single person because we were not allowed to jointly adopt. My “partner” had no legal standing as a parent and could not make health care decisions for our children. They did not have any access to health insurance under a family plan through her provider, and there were other significant issues regarding inheritance.

The second-parent adoption bill passed a year after I testified, and my partner was able to adopt our children. Fast forward twenty-two years. Marriage equality is now the law of the land. LGBTQ people across the country are forming families with children, and states are recognizing them as legal parents. Yet, in our state, LGBTQ families still face barriers. The law withholds from LGBTQ parents, and other nonbiological parents, protections and paths to establish their legal parent-child relationship. We know the issues these families face because we experienced them two decades ago. Legal parentage impacts medical decisions, health insurance, and other benefits and issues around inheritance.

There are so many different types of families today. Non-biological parents have rights. Children born through assisted reproduction and their parents have rights. As LGBTQ folks in Connecticut have long shown, “Love makes a Family”.

The Connecticut Parentage Act (CPA) will update the state’s parentage law to promote the security of all children. Currently, Connecticut parentage law is outdated and unconstitutional. CPA will correct harmful gaps in current Connecticut law, and help to align the law to the realities of modern families.

I strongly urge this Committee and the CT Legislature to pass the Connecticut Parentage Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Penny Barton-Zuckerman, CPA